तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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Govinda at Keshighat

Translation and purport to Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta ādi 5.224 by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

smerāṁ bhaṅgī-traya-paricitāṁ sāci-vistīrṇa-dṛṣṭiṁ
vaṁśī-nyastādhara-kiśalayām ujjvalāṁ candrakeṇa
govindākhyāṁ hari-tanum itaḥ keśi-tīrthopakaṇṭhe
mā prekṣiṣṭhās tava yadi sakhe bandhu-saṅge 'sti raṅgaḥ

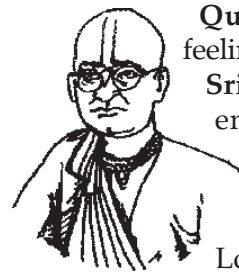
My dear friend, if you are indeed attached to your worldly friends, do not look at the smiling face of Lord Govinda as He stands on the bank of the Yamuna at Keshighat. Casting sidelong glances, He places His flute to His lips, which seem like newly blossomed twigs. His transcendental body, bending in three places, appears very bright in the moonlight.

PURPORT

This is a verse quoted from the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.239) in connection with practical devotional service. Generally, people in their conditioned life engage in the pleasure of society, friendship and love. This so-called love is lust, not love. But people are satisfied with such a false understanding of love. Vidyapati, a great and learned poet of Mithila, has said that the pleasure derived from friendship, society and family life in the material world is like a drop of water, but our hearts desire pleasure like an ocean. Thus the heart is compared to a desert of material existence that requires the water of an ocean of pleasure to satisfy its dryness. If there is a drop of water in the desert, one may indeed say that it is water, but such a minute quantity of water has no value. Similarly, in this material world no one is satisfied in the dealings of society, friendship and love. Therefore, if one wants to derive real pleasure within his heart, he must seek the lotus feet of Govinda. In this verse Rupa Goswami indicates that if one wants to be satisfied in the pleasure of society, friendship and love, he need not seek shelter at the lotus feet of Govinda, for if one takes shelter under His lotus feet he will forget that minute quantity of so-called pleasure. One who is not satisfied with that so-called pleasure may seek the lotus feet of Govinda, who stands on the shore of the Yamuna at Keshi-tirtha, Keshighat, in Vrindavan and attracts all the *gopīs* to His transcendental loving service.

Serving the Devotees

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada



Question: Why are we not feeling any closeness to Krishna?

Srila Prabhupada: The living entity is constitutionally a servitor of the Supreme Lord. But if we do not always associate with the Lord and his devotees, and

next column ☞

do not always serve them, then how can we feel close to the Lord? If we are busy with worldly matters then how can we hear the Lord? At present we are enchanted by false hopes, which have resulted in wrong judgement. Thus we are heavily preoccupied with this world. We have become subject to wrong judgement because we have gone far away from the original fountainhead of our life. One who steps in quicksand will drown very quickly. Similarly, that on which we are depending has a treacherous foundation, and that is why we are drowning in this material ocean. Instead of being on the path to Krishna, we are spending our time in material endeavors, being possessed by wicked desires. *Viṣṇu-māyā,* the illusory energy of the Lord, is imprisoning us by letting us become material enjoyers or fruitive workers. Therefore we should be cautious. We should know that we require guidance at every step. We should be extra careful. We need instruction at every step; we need the guidance of gurudeva at every step.

Serving the devotees is more beneficial for us than serving the Lord. The living entity is benefited more by associating with devotees than by associating with the Lord. The abode of a devotee, meaning the abode of gurudeva, is more favorable for pure devotional service than the abode of the Lord. Srila Bhaktivinode Thakur has said (*Kalyāna-kalpataru* 1.14.4), *yathāya vaiṣṇava-gaṇa sei sthāna vṛndāvana* — Where *vaiṣṇava*s are living, that place is Vrindavan. We have to try to understand the full meaning of these words. But if we become indifferent to the service of gurudeva, then we cannot become servitors. We will remain proud and arrogant. We will remain entangled in external thoughts.

There is no higher thought in the theistic world than service at the lotus feet of Sri Sri Radha-Govinda. Therefore we have to constantly hear *hari-kathā* so we will not be deprived from the service of the Lord, who is *adhokṣaja* or beyond the senses; so we will not become dependent on our senses and on the path of false logic. We have to pay great attention to devotional service, because we have spent many lifetimes doing these other things. We have to become very mindful so we can fulfill our greatest necessity in this very life. If a devotee always serves guru and Krishna with great care, with great attachment and love, then he will definitely feel Krishna's association. ❀

The Glorious Abode of Sri Vrindavan Dham

Excerpts from Srila Jiva Goswami's Śrī Gopāla Campū Purva-campū, chapter one, texts 7-19

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.11.36) Srila Sukadeva Goswami says that Vrindavan is filled with wonderful bliss:

vṛndāvanaṁ govardhanaṁ yamunā-pulināni ca
vīkṣyāsīd uttamā prītī rāma-mādhavayor nṛpa

When Rama and Krishna saw Vrindavan, Govardhan, and the banks of the river Yamuna, They both enjoyed great pleasure.

In Vrindavan is Govardhan Hill, which is glorified in these words:

yad gokuleśvara iti prathitiḥ purāṇe
kṛṣṇasya tad bhavati gokulam asya dhāma
govāsatā ca kila gokulatā-nidānaṁ
govardhanas tad iha sarva-nidhānam eva

The *Purāṇa*s call Lord Krishna by the name Gokulesvara (the master of Gokula). This confirms the truth that Gokula is Lord Krishna's abode. Gokula is also the abode of the *surabhi* cows. Govardhan Hill is the shelter of Krishna and His cows.

It is also said:

tri-jagati mānasa-gaṅgā govardhanam api vibhindatī viditā
aham iha manye kṛṣṇa-snehaja-dhārā tad-antaraṁ viśati

Manasa-ganga and Govardhan are considered two different places in the realm of the three worlds. However, I think they are the same place. They are the same flood of love for Lord Krishna that has entered this world.

It is also said:

tasmin śrī-hari-rādhayor yugalitaṁ yad bhāti kuṇda-dvayaṁ
saṁsaṅgena parasparaṁ parimalān manye tayos tan-miṣam
premāsīt prakaṭaṁ yataḥ śvasanakaiḥ kampānvitaṁ jādya-yug
bhaktārdra-sthiti-kṛc ca tad ghana-rasākāraṁ darīdṛśyate

The two lakes Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda are the lover's meeting of Sri Sri Radha Krishna. I think the sweet fragrances at those lakes are actually Sri Sri Radha-Krishna passionate embraces, the breezes are Radha-Krishna's passionate sighs and trembling, and the water seen in those lakes is Radha-Krishna's passionate love melted into nectar.

About the Yamuna it is said:

snāna-jāta-sukṛtān na kevalāt
sphūrtidā muraripo raveḥ sutā
vīkṣaṇād api yato bibharti sā
śyāma-dhāma-vara-mādhurī-dhurām

To one who simply bathes in her waters, the Yamuna gives the power to see Lord Krishna. To one who sees her, the Yamuna gives the sweetness of Lord Krishna's abode.

Here is a guess about Yamuna's true identity:

śva-snigdha-vṛnda-viṣaya-priyatā-mahimnā
svedāṁśa eva kim u kṛṣṇatanor visārī
vṛndasya kṛṣṇa-viṣaya-priyataiva kiṁ vā
tad-bhāva-bhāvita-gatir bhavati sma kṛṣṇā

Is the Yamuna a single drop of perspiration from Lord Krishna's body? Or is the Yamuna love for Lord Krishna, love that has assumed the form of a dark river?

The Yamuna's banks manifest great bliss and love:

adyāpi yāni vibudhān avaloka-mātrāt
puṣṇanti kṛṣṇa-kṛta-rāsa-rasaṁ vibhāvya
tāny atra kiṁ vara-rasāyana-divya-cūrṇair
abhyāsataḥ sva-pulināni cinoti saurī

Gazing on the Yamuna's shore, the wise devotees have a vision of Lord Krishna's nectar rasa-dance pastimes. Did the Yamuna sprinkle on her shores a divine elixir in the form of grains of sand?

A certain banyan tree makes our hearts tremble:

bhāṇḍīrasya sphuṭam adhihari prema kiṁ varṇanīyaṁ
sāntardhānaṁ sthitavati harau bādham antardadhe yaḥ
yāntu svāṁśena ca viṣayatām atra govardhanādyā
loke snigdhā racayitum idaṁ na kṣamaḥ syām itīva

How can I describe the love a certain banyan tree feels for Lord Krishna? When Lord Krishna disappeared from this world, that tree thought, 'Let Govardhan Hill and the other places stay in this world in their partial expansions. I have no power to stay.' Then that tree also disappeared from this world.

Ah! Look at the deep love Vrindavan forest feels:

kutra kutracid agasya dambhataḥ
stambham eti tad idaṁ harer vanam
prāyaśaś cala-dalasya kampratām
aṅkurasya pulakāni sarvataḥ

Sometimes Lord Krishna's forest becomes stunned like a motionless mountain. Sometimes that forest trembles, its leaves and petals moving. Suddenly pushing out many new sprouts, that forest sometimes stands with the hairs of its body erect in ecstasy.

Why would Lord Krishna and His multitude of Vraja associates not wish to appear in that land of Vrindavan? We see Their appearance in Vrindavan as very appropriate. Some pundits say the land of Vraja is named for the multitudes of the Lord's Vraja associates.

In *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (10.5.18) it is said:

tata ārabhya nandasya vrajaḥ sarva-samṛddhimān
harer nivāsātma-guṇai ramākrīḍam abhūn nṛpa

O Maharaja Pariksit, the home of Nanda Maharaja is eternally the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His transcendental qualities, and is therefore always naturally endowed with the opulence of all wealth. Yet beginning from Lord Krishna's appearance there, it became the place for the pastimes of the goddess of fortune.

Following the *Padma Purāṇa's* descriptions of the Lord's advent in this world, I will soon describe the Lord's entrance, *kalpa* after *kalpa*, into the land of Vrindavan, a delightful, beautiful, opulent land where the Lord killed many crooked demons with dangerous fangs.

The land of Vrindavan is never touched by the material bodies or minds of the residents of the material world. It is filled with *kadamba* trees and many other kinds of glorious trees and plants elaborately described in *Varāha Purāṇa* and other scriptures. Moreover, within its borders Lord Krishna enjoys many eternal nectar pastimes with Balaram, the *gopas*, and the *surabhi* cows, elaborate descriptions of which may be heard in *Skanda Purāṇa* and other scriptures. For all of these reasons it should be understood that the glory and beauty of Vrindavan has no limit. Indeed, Vrindavan is outside the realm of the material world.

Krishna Himself describes Vrindavan in these words from the *Bṛhad-gautamīya Tantra*:

idaṁ vṛndāvanaṁ ramyaṁ mama dhāmaiva kevalam
atra me paśavaḥ pakṣi-mṛgāḥ kīṭā narāmarāḥ
ye vasanti mamādhiṣṇye mṛtā yānti mamālayam
atra yā gopa-kanyāś ca nivasanti mamālaye
yoginyas tā mayā nityaṁ mama sevā-parāyaṇāḥ
pañca-yojanam evāsti vanaṁ me deha-rūpakam
kālindīyaṁ suṣumnākhyā paramāmṛta-vāhinī
atra devāś ca bhūtāni vartante sūkṣma-rūpataḥ
sarva-deva-mayaś cāhaṁ na tyajāmi vanaṁ kvacit
āvirbhāvas tirobhāvo bhaven me'tra yuge yuge
tejo-mayam idaṁ ramyam adṛśyaṁ carma-cakṣuṣā

"Vrindavan is My delightful spiritual abode. When they die, the cows, birds, deer, animals, human beings, and demigods who reside in Vrindavan go to My eternal spiritual abode. Many *gopī* girls also reside here in Vrindavan. They are great *yoginīs* and eternally serve Me with devotion. This forty mile forest of Vrindavan is My own transcendental form. Flowing with nectar, the Yamuna is the transcendental *susumna-cakra*. Manifesting spiritual forms, the demigods and sages stay in this abode of Vrindavan. I, the master of all the demigods, never leave this forest. Yuga after yuga I appear in this abode, and then again I disappear. Material eyes have no power to see this glorious and delightful world of Vrindavan." ❀

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Disciple of Kali-yuga

Srila Thakur Bhaktivinode
Bāul-saṅgīta song 6

eo to' eka kalir celā
māthā neḍā kapni parā, tilak nāke, galāy mālā

Here is a disciple of the personality of Kali-yuga. He keeps his head shaved, wears a loincloth, *tilak* on his nose, and *tulasī* beads around his neck.

dekhte vaiṣṇaver mata, āsalo śākta kājer belā
sahaja-bhajan korchena māmu, saṅge lo'ye parer bālā

He is dressed as a *vaiṣṇava*, but his conduct is that of a worshiper of the material energy. He engages in *sahaja-bhajan* ("easy worship"), and thus poses as an uncle in order to take the illicit association of young maidens.

sakhī-bhāve bhajchena tā're, nije ho'ye nanda-lālā
kṛṣṇa-dāser kathār chale mahā-janake dicchena śalā

Accepting these girls as *sakhīs* (Radha's *gopī* friends), he fancies himself to be the son of Nanda. By his deceptive lecturing about how everyone should become *kṛṣṇa-dāsa*, this disciple of Kali thus hurls a sharp spear at the true devotees of the Lord.

nava-rasika āpane māni' khācchena ābār mana-kolā
bāul bole dohāi, o bhāi, dūra koro e līlā-khelā

Giving artificial recognition to the *nava-rasikas*[1], he thus eats and enjoys the bananas of his own mental fabrications. Chand Baul[2] says, "O my dear brothers! Desist from these imitative sporting pastimes." ❀

— Translated by Sri Dasarath Suta Das. Nectar Books. Union City, Georgia.

Notes

[1] *nava-rasikas* — "nine relishers"; nine previous devotees, Sri Chandidas, Sri Vidyapati, Sri Bilvamangal, Sri Ramananda Ray, Sri Rupa Goswami, etc. One group of *sahajiyas* identifies each of these nine with different material aspects.

[2] Chand Baul — a pseudonym used by Bhaktivinode Thakur.

Most Worshipable

Srila Rupa Goswami's
Padyāvalī, text 83

śyāmam eva paraṁ rūpaṁ purī madhu-purī varā
vayaḥ kaiśorakaṁ dhyeyam ādya eva paro rasaḥ

The form of Shyamasundar is the supreme form, the city of Mathura is the supreme abode, Lord Krishna's fresh youth should always be meditated upon, and the mellow of conjugal love is the supreme mellow. ❀

— By Sri Raghupati Upadhyaya. Translated by Sri Kusakratha Das.

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